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# Service Connection: The Maine Drinking Water Program Newsletter, Volume 13, Issue 3 (Fall 2005)

Maine Department of Health and Human Services

Maine Center for Disease Control and Prevention

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Fall 2005

# Service Connection

THE DRINKING WATER PROGRAM NEWSLETTER  
"Working Together for Safe Drinking Water."



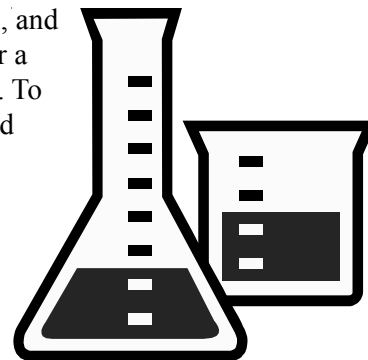
Maine HHS,  
Public Health

## Water Sample Reporting Changes at HETL

James E. Curlett, Chemist III (Organic Chemistry, Chemical Terrorism Response, and Biomonitoring)

Judging from the telephone calls that we have received at the State of Maine Health and Environmental Testing Lab (HETL), our customers have noticed that big changes are occurring. HETL has installed and implemented a new Laboratory Information Management System or computer system. The old system, LabUX, started in 1987. It definitely provided the taxpayers with an excellent return on our tax money, but with service and parts not available and improvements in computers in the last 18 years, it was time for a change.

StarLims was chosen as the new computer system to easily coordinate with the federal CDC laboratories and communicate health, chemical, radiological, and biological terrorism data between states and the federal government. After a year of customizing and preparation, StarLims came on-line in May 2005. To assure that the State provides a deliverable within cost limits and a defined contractual timeframe, the contract specified that only one Certificate of Analysis or lab report be created. The differences in needs between drinking water, environmental, radiological, microbiological, legal, and human health related reports made creating this an impossible task. However, due to the contract stipulations, the lab adopted the strategy of "put everything we could on one report". For the last three months, we have been using our "one size fits none" report. We are sorry.

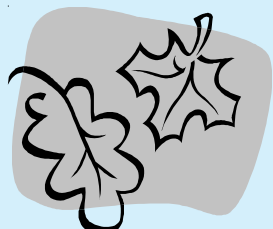


Recently we have begun separating our reports which hit the streets in mid-September. We hope these reports are more user friendly; however, our accrediting bodies have requirements that bind us. These requirements do not make for user-friendly reports considering both the cover sheet and the qualifiers page are required for a complete report.

To continue standardization with the Feds and the rest of the world, tests have been renamed with their EPA designation instead of the simplified HETL codes originally created to help identify testing (i.e. TSBA, TSM, etc.), and we know this has caused much confusion. I must say as a "person from away", the EPA code names do clarify things to me. We have kept the HETL codes as a "billing code" in the system to allow a cross reference point, and these will also be printed on the report cover sheet. This will allow the client and HETL staff to see both the HETL code that you are accustomed to, as well as the EPA method. This has been a big plus in our internal communication at HETL.

See **Reporting Changes**, page 7

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## Report to the Governor on Capacity Development

Bill Johnson, Capacity Development Coordinator

Every three years a status report is sent to the Governor on the Drinking Water Program's Capacity Development Program (Program). The report covers the Program's strategy and progress to improve Maine's public water system capacity. Capacity is the total technical, managerial and financial (TMF) operations of water systems.

Each state developed a strategy to guide the Program. The report states how well the strategy is working and what advancements are being made to improve public water system TMF capacity. The report is available to the public and is posted on the capacity development page of the DWP website. Copies are also available at the DWP office. If you have questions or would like a copy of the report, please contact Bill Johnson at 287-5678.



## Drinking Water State Revolving Loan Fund

Roger Crouse, Assistant Director

On November 8, 2005 voters will have the opportunity to vote on a number of ballot issues. Included in Question 3 on the statewide ballot is \$3.5 million to support the Drinking Water State Revolving Loan Fund (DWSRF). The \$3.5 million will secure \$17.5 million in federal matching funds. The combined funds will be used for the planning, design and construction of water system capital improvements. A portion of the funds from the EPA will also be used for EPA approved Set-Aside activities. These Set-Aside activities include water system technical assistance, capacity grants, wellhead protection grants, land acquisition loans, operator training, and Drinking Water Program staff expenses.

The Drinking Water Program is currently working on the Intended Use Plan (IUP) for the 2006 DWSRF. This IUP will outline how the 2006 DWSRF funds will be spent. Public hearings have been scheduled for November 16 and 17, 2005. Visit the DWP website ([www.medwp.com](http://www.medwp.com)) for a draft copy of the IUP, or contact Roger Crouse at 287-5684 for additional information including time and location for these meetings.

## Service Connection

### THE DRINKING WATER PROGRAM NEWSLETTER

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## Maine DHHS Drinking Water Program Collaborative Work

Andrews Tolman, Source Water Section Manager

The Maine Drinking Water Program has a mandate to improve the protection of Public Water Supply Sources. Because we have few direct tools to assist PWS's in protecting their supplies, most of our progress is made through partnerships, first with the water suppliers themselves, then with the Source Protection and Wellhead Protection staff at Maine Water Utilities Association (MWUA) as well as with the George Mitchell Center at the University of Maine. We also have been working with other state agencies to help facilitate source protection. Highlights of the work we've completed includes:

- ❖ Co-funding and sponsoring Maine NEMO (Nonpoint Education for Municipal Officials with Maine Department of Environmental Protection (DEP), State Planning Office (SPO) Coastal Program) to deliver water resources/water supply/public health protection messages. Has your town heard from NEMO yet?
- ❖ Hosting Maine DEP risks to ground water quality data and Underground Storage Tank data on our internet mapping web site to aid in source protection planning.
- ❖ Forming a cooperative agreement with Maine DEP Geographic Information Systems (GIS) to support our well location program with a cooperative data collection and editing environment. This system keeps our public water supply data current and accurate and helps DEP respond more effectively to potential threats to public water supplies.
- ❖ Working with DEP Land and Water Bureau on sustainable water use and water withdrawal regulation issues over several years to help protect water resources and assure adequate public supply.
- ❖ Working with DEP's storm water group to assure that regulations address the protection of public water supplies.
- ❖ Participating in Lakes, Rivers and Streams, and erosion and sedimentation protection workgroups to assure that public water supply sources are included in DEP regulations and guidance.
- ❖ Working with State Planning Office on comprehensive plan data for all towns doing planning and reviews to help municipalities include protection of public water supplies in their comprehensive plans and ordinances.
- ❖ Working with Office of GIS to develop internet mapping hosting capabilities for public education on drinking water issues and supplies.
- ❖ Negotiating and signing of a memorandum of understanding with DEP's Oil and Hazardous materials group to assure that public water supplies are protected from spills and leaks of petroleum products and when Public Water Supplies are contaminated, treatment and monitoring are protective of public health.
- ❖ Working with the DEP shoreland zoning program to add protection of public water supplies to the criteria for shoreland zoning.
- ❖ Standing DHHS-DEP coordinating committee meetings to manage our areas of common responsibility
- ❖ Membership on Pesticides Control Board State Pesticide Management Plan Team
- ❖ Annually collaborating with DEP, Dept. of Conservation, Dept. of Agriculture, Inland Fisheries & Wildlife, and SPO on common legislative issues, including underground tank legislation, aquifer protection legislation, regulation of surface use of lakes, and other water resource and source protection issues.
- ❖ Collaborating with multiple agencies through the GIS technical committee, Internet Mapping committee, GIS Executive Council. This network provides all state agencies with a good physical and information foundation to make reasoned decisions about protection of public water supplies.
- ❖ Coordinating with DEP education and outreach staff in planning and implementing the Northern and Southern Maine Childrens' Water Festivals, and a variety of water resources education and outreach efforts.

Most recently, the Legislature has authorized the DWP, in consultation with Maine DEP, Maine Geological Survey and the Department of Agriculture, to conduct a formal review of state regulations that provide protection to public water supplies. Resolve 029 gives us an opportunity to take a fresh look at the state's policies in light of the results of the Assessments. We'll be working on the review this fall.



## Public Water System Emergency Response Handbooks

Bill Johnson, Security Coordinator

The Drinking Water Program (DWP) has assembled a *Public Water System Emergency Response Handbook* for public water systems (PWS) that did not previously prepare an emergency response plan (ERP). The handbooks are available for small community and non-transient, non-community PWS to use in developing ERPs. The handbooks contain useful information on emergency response planning and procedures, helpful contact information as well as system specific information on each system's source water (surface water or wells) and current sampling requirements. Extra sections are available for sampling results, sanitary surveys and other records related to water operations.

The Maine Rural Water Association is assisting the DWP in offering training on how to use the *Handbooks*. These sessions will continue through December. If you would like information on the *Handbooks* contact Bill Johnson at 287-5678, or on the training sessions, please contact the Maine Rural Water Association at 729-6569.

## Submitting Monthly Operating Reports

Roger Crouse, Assistant Director

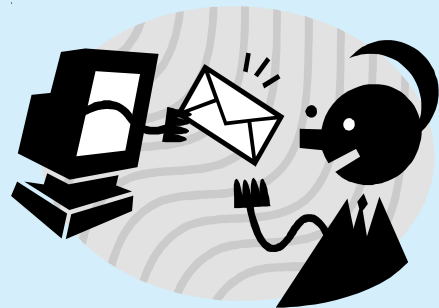
The electronic submission of monthly operating reports has started off quite successfully with the submission of August's reports. Approximately 60 public water systems from Kittery to Fort Kent are sending in their monthly operating reports to the Drinking Water Program. Some comments from operators include the following: "Wow", "Neat", "I love electronic submission", "Huh?", "This is so easy", "Thank you."

The biggest problem that we faced was the automatic reply feature. For security or some other unknown reason, our auto-reply feature only works within the State of Maine system. As a result we switched to a less automated, but equally effective method of the DWP clerk reply to each e-mail received.

Answers to some other common questions or problems include the following:

- File names must be similar to: Anytown Water District PWSID#99999 July MOR.xls
- The e-mail subject line must be similar to: Anytown Water District PWSID#999999 July MOR
- Please only submit Monthly Operating Reports to this e-mail address. Other electronic submittals, such as Total Coliform Rule reporting, should be sent directly to the rule coordinator.
- Your Monthly Operating Report must be submitted as an attachment. Files inserted into the body of the e-mail are not acceptable.
- You can use a different file format, such as a pdf, provided that when we print it out, it still fits on one page and looks the same.
- Multiple Monthly Operating Reports can be submitted as one file with multiple worksheets or in a separate file for each Monthly Operating Report.

Thanks to everyone who has used this submission method. It is nice to finally arrive at the 20<sup>th</sup> Century. If you would like to submit your MORs via e-mail, the address is [dwpmor@maine.gov](mailto:dwpmor@maine.gov). For more information, contact Roger Crouse at 287-5684 or Jennifer Hitchcock at 287-3962.





## Well Drillers Rules Updated

David Braley, Senior Geologist, Source Water Protection Section

The Maine Well Drillers Commission has adopted new regulations that address several issues regarding the location and construction of water wells in Maine.

Effective October 1, 2005, the Well Drillers and Pump Installers Rules, 144A CMR Chapter 232, will include requirements for permanently affixing well information to either the well cap, pressure tank, or a location clearly visibly near the pressure tank. This information must be replaced or updated whenever alterations or repairs are made to a well.

In addition, the rules now include a section covering the process of hydrofracing a well. Hydrofracing is the process of pumping water down into a well at tremendous pressures in order to improve the yield of the well.



The water used for this purpose must now be from a potable source or properly disinfected prior to use. All hydrofracing must now be performed by a licensed well driller, or by someone in the responsible charge of a licensed well driller, packer types and the minimum depth at which they may be used are now defined, and the well must be properly disinfected after the hydrofracing is completed. The last provision concerning hydrofracing requires that public water suppliers be notified in writing at least 48 hours prior to hydrofracing for any well within 150 feet of a public water supply well.

For more information regarding the Well Drillers Rules, please contact either Carol Champagne at 287-5699 or David Braley at 287-3194.

## Water Security Project

Bill Johnson, Security Coordinator

This May, the Drinking Water Program (DWP) issued a request for proposals for a contractor to help update and improve emergency response preparedness and to assist public water systems (PWS) in exercising their emergency response plans. The request outlined four tasks:

1. Define the DWP's roles, responsibilities and protocols in emergency response situations;
2. Update the DWP's Emergency Response Plan to incorporate updated information and responsibilities;
3. Define and establish the appropriate communication links and communication protocols for the DWP; and
4. Assist in providing emergency response training to PWS and associated response agencies, including DWP staff.

The DWP received seven impressive proposals, making the selection challenging. A panel of five evaluators chose Woodard & Curran as the awardee. The project is anticipated to take about a year to complete. The DWP and Woodard & Curran plan to host four tabletop exercises throughout the state for PWS to exercise their plans with other first responders.

For more information, contact Bill Johnson at 287-5678.



## Water Operator News

Terry Trott, Operator Licensing Officer

### Water Operator Board Dates for 2006

Date	Description	Location
Jan. 19	Board Meeting	Brunswick-Topsham Water District
Feb. 25	Applications for exams due	
March 16	Board Meeting	DHHS 286 Water St. Augusta
April 4 and 6	Examinations	Augusta & Presque Isle
May 13	Applications for exams due	
June 15	Board Meeting	Brunswick-Topsham Water District
June 27	Examination	Augusta
Sept. 9	Applications for exams due	
Sept. 21	Board Meeting	DHHS 286 Water St. Augusta
Oct. 17 & 19	Examinations	Augusta & Presque Isle
Nov. 17	Board Meeting	Brunswick-Topsham Water District
Dec. 31	Odd Numbered Licenses Expire	

### Owner vs. Operator: “It’s not my job, man”

With more public water systems being operated by contract operators, many discussions have arisen concerning responsibility. The owner of a public water system is ultimately responsible for that system. The owner must place the water quality and quantity in the responsible charge of the licensed operator. What a finger pointing situation this could be.

Communication is key. Owners should inform operators of any action planned or taken that affects water quality, even if the work is done by another licensed professional. Owners also are often the recipients of water analyses and customer comments. This information should also be passed along to operators so they can look for trends or possible contamination sources. Designated operators are responsible for directing any actions affecting water quality or quantity. This responsibility extends to the entire system, from the water source to the tap - far beyond just taking samples. Operators also should communicate any maintenance needs or changes in operation that may be necessary, both for final permission as well as budgeting considerations.

In this age of communication technology, human effort is the most likely limiting factor. The bottom line is: operators can’t be responsible for actions they were not informed of happening, and owners can’t be responsible to correct deficiencies if they have not been informed that the deficiency exists.

#### Operator Expense Reimbursement Grant (ERG)

Examination fees for three (3) free exams can be waived for employees of systems serving less than 3,300 persons.

Renewal fees for 2005 will be waived for all operators of systems serving less than 3,300 persons. Please list the system employed with and check the fee waived box.

Great training opportunities are funded. Pre-exam training and continuing education TCHs may be found at reasonable costs. Watch the DWP Training Calendar at [www.medwp.com](http://www.medwp.com)

#### Planning Your Professional Development.

We’ve heard the saying “the best defense is a good offense.”

Drinking water professionals protect public health playing both roles as offense (maintaining water quality and quantity) *and* defense (keeping contamination out). As a front line defender of your water system, are you up to date with new tools to make your tasks more efficient and safe, planning programs to prepare for unexpected events and maintaining equipment? On the field, do you know how upcoming regulations will affect your system?

Plan your professional development by selecting from many approved courses for license renewal. Check the training calendar at [www.medwp.com](http://www.medwp.com) for courses to assist your planning for your professional future. If there is training you want and don’t see, let training organizations or DWP know. We’ll look to find it.



## New DWP Staff: Rebecca Reynolds

Water Operator Specialist

Rebecca received a Bachelor of Science in Geography/Earth Science from University of Massachusetts in Boston. During the past twelve years, she worked for the Massachusetts Water Resource Authority where she began as an intern and progressed to Lab Tech, Operator, and finally to Monitoring Coordinator. Rebecca worked in the Process Control and Engineering Department during the start up of the secondary process at the Deer Island Treatment Plant maintaining the Process Labs, QAQC, technical support and training for the operators. She has been an instructor at the Peterson School for the past five years preparing operators for ABC exams in Massachusetts. She is delighted to have returned to her native state and is enjoying the additional time she can spend with her family.



**COMING SOON** to a mailbox near you – an exciting, innovative, informational, light-hearted provide one full year of education, humor, and mindless trivia that will benefit your water system time and again. What's this unbeatable tool? Why, a calendar, of course, featuring all (well maybe not all) you will ever need to know about compliance with the drinking water rules. So, watch your mailboxes in December for this publication!

### Reporting Changes, continued from page 1

We are performing exactly the same analyses for you that we always have; no more, no less, nothing different or additional. We just had to change test names to comply with NELAP and the EPA.

There are a few additional changes you should be aware of:

1. A sample submittal event is captured in a numbered folder e.g. (A000001);
2. That folder number can contain up to 999 sample numbers (A000001001 – A000001999);
3. Multiple analyses can be performed on the same sample (bottles filled at the same place and time);
4. Your invoice will have the same number as your folder. This way, if you are required to take 5 samples, you can hold onto one number and we can find everything you will need to know about your samples.

*And most importantly:*

5. If you are required to take 5 samples (for example) and only send back three, you will not get a report until all samples are submitted, analyzed, and QC'ed. You must submit all samples or call and have us reject the non-submitted samples, which puts you out of compliance with the DWP.

Now that the majority of the issues with the computer system have been resolved, we are seeing a more rapid turnaround time on samples and improved tracking of QC data and transfer data to the DWP. We apologize for any inconvenience in our service during this implementation phase; we hope that the disruption has been minimal and that the improved efficiencies for the years to come will offset the problems. We are beginning to bring on many new features of our computer system including the ability to email reports directly upon sample completion.

If you have any questions, please feel free to contact me at [James.Curlett@maine.gov](mailto:James.Curlett@maine.gov).





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## Service Connection

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